



BUDGET COMMITTEE



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**Senator Gregg's Senate Floor Remarks
on the True Cost of Democrats' Senate Health Care Reform Bill
November 21, 2009
(unofficial transcript)**

Madam President, I know we are joined by some of the most distinguished members of our caucus. They have some thoughts they want to express. Then we want to discuss a couple of points in this bill. Before I turn to the Senator from Missouri, I just want to make a point because I have been listening to a lot of the discussion here on the floor and I have obviously participated and listened to a lot of it on television.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to claim this bill costs about \$800 billion. That's the number they say has been reached as the expenditure on this bill. Ladies and gentlemen, that is a totally dishonest number. That is the ultimate shell game. That is Washington cynical politics. You know how they get to that number? Which is a ten-year number, by the way. How they get to this number of \$800 billion as the cost of this bill, which, by the way, that's a lot of money, \$800 billion. That would run the state of New Hampshire for, I don't know, probably 100 years. Literally almost 100 years. It would run Missouri, a bigger state, for a while. Probably run Alabama for a little while, too. South Dakota could run for 200 years, for all I know.

It's a lot of money, \$800 billion-plus. But that is not the cost of this bill. The way that number was arrived at was that they don't start spending money on this bill until the fourth or the fifth year. They couldn't get the score they wanted from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), so they changed the starting point. They moved back another year in the ten-year cycle. They went from four years to five years as to the starting point of most of the spending in this bill. What they claim to the American people is that a ten-year bill is going to cost about \$800-plus billion.

What they don't tell the American people is they're not spending anything in the first four or five years of the bill. No. They do raise your taxes throughout the ten-year period. They do cut Medicare throughout the ten-year period. But they don't spend the money. They don't start the spending programs until the year 2014, when this bill is fully phased in, when all these new programs, these massive expansion of entitlements are created, these brand-new entitlements. When all this new spending occurs, this bill will cost \$2.5

trillion over that ten-year period. \$2.5 trillion. That's the real cost of this bill. That's how big this government is going to grow in a ten-year window as a result of this spending.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think most of us understand that we already have a huge debt problem in this nation, and that we're passing on to our kids a country with so much debt that they're not going to be able to afford it. Every year for the next ten years, without this health care bill, the President has proposed budgets which will run \$1 trillion deficits. Every year, on average, for the next ten years. Sometime this month we're going to have to raise the debt ceiling of this country because we've reached \$12 trillion in debt. And then it's going to have to be raised again because we're running up these massive deficits. The debt owed by this country will exceed 80% of our gross domestic product. Eighty percent of our gross national product at the end of that ten-year period and exceed 60% of our gross domestic product within two years. Those are unsustainable numbers.

Yet, a bill is being proposed here on the floor that is going to expand the size of government by \$2.5 trillion. It is alleged it's paid for. We're going to get into discussion of that in some depth because I think that is an equally cynical number of bait-and-switch. I just wanted to clear the air as to the real cost of this bill because I found it uniquely cynical that it would be represented that this bill costs \$800 billion, or whatever the number was. And it does call into issue the credibility of the rest of the numbers that are being thrown out by the other side of the aisle when they use that number, which is a five-year spending number that they claim covers a ten-year period when they don't do anything in the first five years of that period.

I appreciate the indulgence of the Senator from Missouri. I understand he wishes to speak. Then we'll go to the Senator from Alabama, and then the Senator from South Dakota, and then we'll have a little discussion here about some of these issues, like cost, like how it affects Medicare, how it affects small businesses, how it's going to affect your personal insurance.